

## Grace Works, Part 2 - Romans 4:4-8 - September 18th, 2011

- Today will be part two of a series I've titled; "Grace Works." I am keenly aware that this title sounds like an oxymoron, but works does not work.
- This is why Paul writes this, in this way. He's got to get these Jews to abandon any notion that their good works under the law is good enough.
- Here-to-fore, he's been dismantling their hyper-religious morality, with the hopes that they might realize it's grace, not works, apart from the law.

- The problem that Paul is up against, just so happens to be one of our biggest problems when it comes to our thinking that good works, works.
- In a sense, it's this mindset that has bought into the lie of man earning, by his good works, a good standing with God, and the blessing of God.
- Doing this puts the onus, or emphasis, if you prefer, on the individual, and in so doing, makes it about me, and or, what I am able to do for God.

### 1. When it's not about what I am doing (Verses 1-3)

- (1) What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? (2) If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. (3) What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."
- Paul demonstrates this by bringing father Abraham into the discussion and not for the reasons they would think. He wasn't justified by his works.

### 2. When I'm not trying to earn God's blessing (Verses 4-5)

- (4) Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. (5) However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.
- v4 By way of illustration, Paul uses an interesting analogy of an employer crediting his employers wages to him as a gift instead of an obligation.
  - v5 He contrasts this with the man who did not work to earn his paycheck, but rather trusts God to credit his account as righteousness by his faith.
  - This in no way implies it was something this man did, i.e., working to have enough faith to justify his account being credited as righteousness.

William Newell - "To a man that works for wages, the wages are due as a debt. That is a simple enough principle. But do not seek to apply it to salvation! No one ever got righteousness by work or worth! Righteousness is not by doing right, strange and impossible as that may seem. ...to him who "casts his deadly doing down"; who, seeing his guilt, and his entire inability to put it away, ceases wholly from all efforts to [earn] God's favor by his own doings, or self-denying,—even by his prayers: but believeth on the God that declareth righteous the ungodly—not the godly or the good!

- The greatest beneficiaries of God's grace are the ones who see it as unmerited, unearned and undeserved, because they're so utterly unworthy.
- Conversely, the ones who least benefit from God's grace do so because they see themselves as worthy having merited, earned and deserved it.
- If that's my posture before God, then I will ever be trying to "do" everything so as to merit, earn, and deserve the blessing of God in my life.

- It's as if we're working to give God every reason to bless us, and no reason not to bless us, based on our earning it, and or working hard for it.
- If the truth be known, we really don't want to be in a position to earn God's blessing because if we had to work for it we would never be sure of it.
- If both salvation and sanctification were not grace based, then we would always be full of ambiguity and uncertainty based on if we earned it.

As one so aptly said it; "The Father thought it. The Son bought it. The Spirit taught it. The Bible brought it. Satan fought it. But, praise the Lord, by His grace, we got it!"

- Be that as it may, grace works when I stop trying to work for it and earn it. Simply put, that Christian life is a life that doesn't work. It just can't.
- One of the characteristics of a Christian life of works is, it soon gives way to a life of legalism, which ultimately suffocates the joy out of that life.

### 3. When I receive God's credited righteousness (Verses 6-8)

- (6) David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: (7) "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (8) Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."
- v6 Paul now brings David in saying the same thing related to the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works.
  - v7-8 He quotes David in Psalms 32:1-2. David writes; "Blessed are they whose sins are forgiven and covered, and never counted against them.
  - Here again, this begs the question of why the Apostle Paul would go from Abraham to David. What is the common denominator between them?

- To the Jew, Abraham was their father, and David their king. Both of them shared one thing in common, namely, God's credited righteousness.
- God's righteousness credited nullifies man's sinfulness debited. God did not credit both their accounts because they worked for it and earned it.
- If that were the case, then it would've been a debit instead of a credit. The wages or earnings of sin is death/works, but the gift is life/grace.

2 Corinthians 3:6 NIV He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

One commentator wrote; "No sinner, and try he ever so hard, can possibly carry his own sins away and come back cleansed of guilt. No amount of money, no science, no inventive skill, no armies of millions, nor any other earthly power can carry away from the sinner one little sin and its guilt. Once it is committed, every sin and its guilt cling to the sinner as close as does his own shadow, cling to all eternity unless God carries them away."

- Suffice it to say, grace works when I have been the recipient of God's credited righteousness and not debited because of my sinfulness.